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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001894

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: NCP AND SPLM READY TO RESUME TALKS BUT DIFFERENCES
REMAIN

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1882
[B](#). KHARTOUM 1890
[C](#). KHARTOUM 1709

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: President Bashir and First Vice President Kiir will meet again December 3 to try to clear the way for the NCP and SPLM to resume negotiations to end their political stalemate, representatives of both parties confirmed. The SPLM is still holding out for a negotiating agenda that includes resolving Abyei, however, while the NCP would like to remove Abyei from the agenda and leave it for the Vice Presidents to discuss separately. The SPLM has confirmed that Salva Kiir, Luka Biong Deng, and possibly Pagan Amum and Deng Alor will attend the December 5 Sudan Ministerial with Secretary Rice in Addis Ababa. The NCP declined (via the MFA) but NCP contacts say it is not out of the question that the NCP will send a delegation, depending on the outcome of the Bashir-Kiir meeting. End summary.

SPLM Holding out on Abyei

[1](#)2. (C) SPLM Northern Rep Yasir Arman told polchief December 1 that First Vice President Kiir will meet with President Bashir December 3, which could clear the way for the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to resume "six-member committee" negotiations with the National Congress Party (NCP). However the SPLM wants Abyei to be on the agenda, while the NCP is insisting that the matter be negotiated separately. Arman claimed the SPLM has "presented several options" to the NCP on Abyei, and lack of progress on the issue proves that the NCP does not want to solve the issue (some of these options will be waiving some or part of the Abyei arrears, an oil revenue sharing package, and a readjusted border closer to what was discussed in early November - reftel c) . Arman said the SPLM will attend the December 5 Ministerial with Secretary Rice in Addis, but at a higher level than previously reported (Ref A). First Vice President Salva Kiir will attend along with Presidential Advisor Luka Biong Deng and possibly Foreign Minister-designee Deng Alor and Secretary General Pagan Amum.

[1](#)3. (C) Yasir confirmed that former SPLA Commander (from the Nuba Mountains) and Garang confidante Abdul Aziz Helou has mended relations with Salva Kiir following a meeting between the two in Washington and will return to Juba this week to take up a portfolio in the SPLM Politburo. Meanwhile, Kiir has convened a Board of Investigation to decide what

penalties to impose on several members of the SPLM who have undermined the movement. Lam Akol is accused of receiving funding from the NCP to create a splinter faction within the SPLM, Tillar Deng is accused of attempting to divide the SPLM by spreading false rumors that Pagan Amum wanted to overthrow Salva Kiir. Alieu Ayiey is accused of spreading false information about the death of John Garang (claiming that the crash in Uganda was not an accident) in order to divide the movement.

NCP Warns of Dire Consequences

¶4. (C) NCP insider Dirdeiry Mohammed Ahmed confirmed the December 3 Bashir-Kiir meeting and reported that the six-member committee has already begun work behind the scenes to lay the groundwork for both the Presidential meeting and the negotiating agenda for the six-member committee. He said the NCP believes it is useless for the committee to discuss Abyei because that will leave no time to discuss implementation timelines for border demarcation, troop redeployments, JIU deployment, and the census, among others. Dirdeiry said the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) had committed in the Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC) December 1 to fully redeploy all forces by January 9.

¶5. (C) Dirdeiry questioned why the SPLM remains outside the government when "everything has been solved except Abyei" and there is critical legislation that must be passed by the Council of Ministers and the Parliament, including the national budget which he said will be approved with or without the SPLM by December 15. Dirdeiry predicted dire consequences if the SPLM does not commit to resolve all issues except Abyei and rejoin the government before January

KHARTOUM 00001894 002 OF 002

¶9. He predicted that if the SPLM does not send its Ministers back to their posts by January 9, the movement will be under intense pressure from within not to rejoin the government until the Abyei issue is solved, "and this could take a long time." He pointed out that this will only increase the divisions within the SPLM, and suggested it also carries a risk for the NCP (for once, we agree, it will increase risks for both). Dirdeiry said that there are probably many senior officers in the SAF who, just like President Bashir in 1989, will become impatient with the incessant NCP-SPLM haggling, especially if there are not timely elections.

¶16. (C) Dirdeiry said the NCP is "not opposed in principle" to attending the December 5 Ministerial in Addis with Secretary Rice, but he said its attendance will depend on the December 3 Bashir-Kiir meeting. If there is general agreement by the two parties on the way forward, then the meeting in Addis could be useful. (Note: This is the second indication by NCP party officials outside of the GNU that the NCP might attend the Addis Ministerial (Ref B) though the official response is still "a polite no" and we have informed the MFA that the Sudan Ministerial will go forward without them. End note.) Presidential Assistant Dr. Mustafa Othman Ismail refused on December 2 to comment publicly on the December 5 Ministerial which shows the extreme caution the NCP is taking with this event, despite the MFA's private rejection. In fact, no Sudanese NCP official has publicly said a word about it.

¶17. (C) Comment: Despite internal divisions within the SPLM over negotiating strategy and intense emotions on the Abyei issue from Ngok Dinka such as Deng Alor and Luka Biong Deng, the SPLM should seriously consider putting the CPA ahead of Abyei to ensure that other aspects of the agreement move forward. It is certainly in their interests to do so for a host of reasons, including avoidance of further internal division. If the U.S. reassures the SPLM at a high level (perhaps at the Addis Ministerial) that the U.S. will engage on Abyei, they can be convinced to rejoin the GNU and move forward on the rest of the CPA. The problem is that the SPLM rightly fears that if they don't get a solution on Abyei now

to their satisfaction, they may never do so. The SPLM is also considering reasserting the January 9, 2008 deadline to keep the pressure on. But that pressure works both ways. End comment.

FERNANDEZ